IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14-19, 21, and 23-31, cancel claims 7 and 22 without disclaimer or prejudice, and add new claims 32-39, as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring connections between a plurality of network nodes ~~(TP0 to TP5)~~, wherein each pair of network nodes is connected via virtual direct connections, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

performing quality measurements of the virtual direct connections between each pair of the network nodes ~~(S4)~~; and

deciding, based on the results of the quality measurements, whether a virtual direct connection is to be used for conveying data or not ~~(S7 to S10)~~,

wherein the results of the quality measurements are transmitted to a network configuration control element ~~(TA)~~ which performs the deciding ~~step~~, and

wherein the quality measurements comprise a measurement of a data loss rate on a virtual direct connection between two network nodes.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein in the deciding ~~step~~, when it is decided that between two network nodes ~~(TP0, TP3)~~ no virtual direct connection is usable, a route between these two network nodes via at least one other network node ~~(TP1)~~ is determined based on the results of the quality measurements.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the network nodes are tunnel-end-points and the virtual direct connection between each pair of the network nodes ~~(TP0 to TP5)~~ are tunnels, the tunnels providing virtual connections between the nodes by encapsulating a first type network protocol within data carried by a second type network.

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the quality measurements are performed by each network node ~~(TP)~~ with respect to the virtual direct connections to other network nodes ~~(TP0 to TP5)~~.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the quality measurements comprise measurement of a delay time on a virtual direct connection between two network nodes.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 5, wherein a threshold ~~(*M*)~~ for a maximum allowable delay time is set, and when a delay time on a virtual direct connection exceeds the threshold, the connection is determined as not being usable.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein a threshold for a maximum allowable data loss rate ~~(*p*)~~ is set, and when a data loss rate on a virtual direct connection exceeds the threshold, the virtual connection is determined as not being usable.

9. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein the quality measurements further comprise measurement of a delay time on a virtual direct connection between the two network nodes, and a result of the delay time measurement and a result of the data loss rate measurement are combined to a single quality measurement result.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein the result of the delay time measurement and the result of the data loss rate measurement are respectively weighted on combining them.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein on combining, the delay time measurement result and the packet data loss rate measurement result are normalized, respectively.

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9; wherein a threshold ~~(*M*)~~ for a maximum allowable delay time is set, and when a delay time on a connection exceeds the threshold, the connection is determined as not being usable.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein the single quality measurement result is converted into an integer value.

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the measuring and the deciding ~~step~~ are performed every predetermined interval.

15. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the measuring and the deciding ~~step~~ are performed upon triggering by an operator of the networks or upon changing the network configuration.

16. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the results of the deciding ~~step~~ are sent to the network nodes and the network nodes update routing tables correspondingly.

17. (Currently Amended) A network system comprising a plurality of network nodes ~~(TP0 to TP5)~~ and a network configuration control element ~~(TA)~~, wherein each pair of network nodes is connected via virtual direct connections,

wherein the network nodes are ~~adapted~~ configured to perform quality measurements of the virtual direct connections and to send results of the quality measurements to the network configuration control element, and the network configuration control element ~~(TA)~~ is ~~adapted~~ configured to decide, based on the results of the quality measurements, whether a virtual direct connection is to be used for conveying data or not, and

wherein the quality measurements comprise a measurement of a data loss rate on a virtual direct connection between two network nodes.

18. (Currently Amended) The network system according to claim 17, wherein the network configuration element is ~~adapted~~ configured to determine, when it has decided that between two network nodes ~~(TP0, TP3)~~ no virtual direct connection is usable, a route between these two network nodes via at least one other network node ~~(TP1)~~ based on the results of the quality measurements.

19. (Currently Amended) The network system according to claim 17, wherein the virtual direct connection between each pair of the network nodes ~~(TP0 to TP5)~~ are tunnels, the tunnels providing virtual connections between the nodes by encapsulating a first type network protocol within data carried by a second type network.

20. (Original) The system according to claim 17, wherein the quality measurements comprise measurement of a delay time on a virtual direct connection between two network nodes.

21. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 20, wherein a threshold ~~(*M*)~~ for a maximum allowable delay time is set, and at least one of the network configuration control element ~~(TA)~~ and~~/or~~ each network node ~~(TP)~~ is ~~adapted~~ configured to determine the virtual direct connection as not being usable when a delay time on a virtual direct connection exceeds the threshold.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim ~~22~~ 17, wherein a threshold for a maximum allowable data loss rate ~~(*p*)~~ is set, and the network configuration control element ~~(TA)~~ and/or each network node ~~(TP)~~ is ~~adapted~~ configured to determine the virtual direct connection as not being usable when a data loss rate on a virtual direct connection exceeds the threshold.

24. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim ~~22~~ 17, wherein the quality measurements further comprise measurement of a delay time on a tunnel between the two network nodes, and each network node ~~(TP)~~ is ~~adapted~~ configured to combine a

result of the delay time measurement and a result of the data loss rate measurement to a single quality measurement result.

25. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 24, wherein each network node ~~(TP)~~ is ~~adapted~~ configured to weight respectively the result of the delay time measurement and the result of the data loss rate measurement on combining them.

26. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 24, wherein each network node ~~(TP)~~ is ~~adapted~~ configured to normalize respectively the delay time measurement result and the packet data loss rate measurement result.

27. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 24, wherein a threshold ~~(M)~~ for a maximum allowable delay time is set, and the network configuration control element ~~(TA)~~ and/or each network node ~~(TP)~~ is ~~adapted~~ configured to determine the virtual direct connection as not being usable when a delay time on a connection exceeds the threshold.

28. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 24, wherein each network node is ~~adapted~~ configured to convert the single quality measurement result into an integer value.

29. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 17, wherein the network configuration control element ~~(TA)~~ is ~~adapted~~ configured to request the quality measurement and to request the measurement and to perform the decision every predetermined interval.

30. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 17, wherein the network configuration control element ~~(TA)~~ is ~~adapted~~ configured to request the quality measurement and to request the measurement and to perform the decision upon triggering by an operator of the networks or upon changing the network configuration.

31. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 17, wherein the network configuration control element is ~~adapted~~ configured to send the results of the decision to the network nodes, and the network nodes are ~~adapted~~ configured to update routing tables correspondingly.

32. (New) A network system, comprising:

a plurality of network nodes and a network configuration control element, wherein each pair of network nodes is connected via virtual direct connections,

wherein the network nodes include means for performing quality measurements of the virtual direct connections and sending results of the quality measurements to the network configuration control element, and the network configuration control element means for deciding, based on the results of the quality measurements, whether a virtual direct connection is to be used for conveying data or not,

wherein the quality measurements comprise a measurement of a data loss rate on a virtual direct connection between two network nodes.

33. (New) A network node, wherein the network node is connected via virtual direct connections to other network nodes, and the virtual direct connections are tunnels, the tunnels providing virtual connections by encapsulating a first type network protocol within data carried by a second type network,

wherein the network node is configured to perform quality measurements of the virtual direct connections and to send results of the quality measurements to a network configuration control element, and

wherein the quality measurements comprise a measurement of a data loss rate on a virtual direct connection to another one of the other network nodes.

34. (New) The network node according to claim 33, wherein the quality measurements comprise measurement of a delay time on a virtual direct connection to another one of the other network nodes.

35. (New) A network configuration control element for configuring a network comprising a plurality of network nodes, wherein each pair of the network node is connected via virtual direct connections, the virtual direct connection between each pair of the network nodes are tunnels, the tunnels providing virtual connections between the nodes by encapsulating a first type network protocol within data carried by a second type network,

wherein the network configuration control element is configured to decide, based on results of quality measurements performed by the network nodes, whether a virtual direct connection is to be used for conveying data or not,

wherein the quality measurements comprise a measurement of a data loss rate on a virtual direct connection to another one of the other network nodes.

36. (New) The network configuration control element according to claim 35, wherein the network configuration control element is configured to request the quality measurement and to request the measurement and to perform the decision every predetermined interval.

37. (New) The network configuration control element according to claim 35, wherein the network configuration control element is configured to request the quality measurement and to request the measurement and to perform the decision upon triggering by an operator of the networks or upon changing the network configuration.

38. (New) A network node, wherein the network node is connected via virtual direct connections to other network nodes, and the virtual direct connections are tunnels, the tunnels providing virtual connections by encapsulating a first type network protocol within data carried by a second type network,

wherein the network node comprises means for performing quality measurements of the virtual direct connections and for sending results of the quality measurements to a network configuration control element,

wherein the quality measurements comprise a measurement of a data loss rate on a virtual direct connection to another one of the other network nodes.

39. (New) A network configuration control element for configuring a network comprising a plurality of network nodes, wherein each pair of the network node is connected via virtual direct connections, the virtual direct connection between each pair of the network nodes are tunnels, the tunnels providing virtual connections between the nodes by encapsulating a first type network protocol within data carried by a second type network, wherein

the network configuration control element comprises means for deciding, based on results of quality measurements performed by the network nodes, whether a virtual direct connection is to be used for conveying data or not, wherein the quality measurements comprise a measurement of a data loss rate on a virtual direct connection to another one of the other network nodes.